

House panel will look at transportation bucks

By [Ben Wear](#) | Friday, February 19, 2010, 01:54 PM

A specially formed committee of Texas House members will study transportation funding over the next several months and recommends legislation for the 2011 session, House Speaker Joe Straus' office announced this afternoon.

State Rep. Larry Phillips, R-Sherman, and Eddie Rodriguez, D-Austin, will co-chair the House Select Committee on Transportation Funding. The committee, according to the speaker's office, will "review the effectiveness and efficiency of current funding options."

Texas transportation funding, based for decades on gas taxes and then for a few years heavily on toll roads, is at a crossroads. The gas tax, unchanged since 1991, has lost considerable ground to inflation and the Legislature has resisted raising the levy. Meanwhile, taxpayers and legislators alike have rebelled against an over-reliance on toll funding. Last season, legislation to give local communities the option to raise the gas tax or other fees for transportation failed in the session's final days.

The committee will include the following members: Patricia Harless, R-Spring; Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi; Ruth McClendon, D-San Antonio; Joe Pickett, D-El Paso (also the chairman of the House Transportation Committee); Vicki Truitt, R-Keller; Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City; Roberto Alonzo, D-Dallas; Bill Callegari, R-Katy; Edmund Kuempel, R-Seguin; Armando Martinez, D-Weslaco; Wayne Smith, R-Baytown; and Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston.